

than 94,660 projects. The Government Accountability Office, which has been charged with assessing this program, has generally found that these programs have achieved the goal of enhanced participation of a small business in research and development fields.

Given the interest of the Committee on Science and Technology on the research and development of new technology, our committee has a unique interest in this bill. We have long been concerned about how America competes with the rest of the world in these areas. Many initiatives that have been passed by our committee in this Congress have focused on the need to improve our competitiveness in the world through funding of science education programs and public outreach efforts. I view this legislation as one more way we can reach out to the public to assist American innovation.

My only regret with regard to this legislation is that I do not believe it was able to receive the proper attention it warranted by the Committee on Science and Technology. Our committee shares jurisdiction on this legislation, primarily concentrated on the areas of science itself and the amount of science funding.

However, the full committee was not given the opportunity to consider this legislation and have its voice heard with regard to its continuation, primarily because there was a great hurry to bring this bill to the floor. Had regular order been provided, I believe we would be bringing a different bill to the floor today. And in view of that, I have offered an amendment that I believe will strengthen the bill, make it sounder in funding, preserve the funding of other resources and other research in the Federal Government, and also provide an opportunity to increase the funding for SBIR and STTR in the future by bringing up the funding for the other agencies of which these two organizations receive a percentage.

But I believe the approach in the bill of simply arbitrarily increasing the funding for SBIR and STTR hurts our research efforts in the Nation, and I will speak later on that topic when my amendment reaches the floor.

The second reservation is voiced by Mr. GINGREY of Georgia and, if we have time, we will enter into that discussion later and I will give him an opportunity to speak.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR), a member of the Small Business Committee, for 3 minutes.

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Mr. CUELLAR. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 5819, the SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act.

The creation of the Small Business Innovation Research program has benefited small businesses across the

United States. Through the SBIR program, small businesses have been given the opportunity to provide innovative solutions that benefit the Federal Government through the research and development of new products.

I applaud the chairwoman's efforts. NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ has worked extremely hard with all members of the committee to make sure that we properly make the changes to the SBIR program. I commend the chairwoman, and the ranking member, also, for their diligence in protecting and encouraging the participation of small business concerns owned by women, veterans and minorities, all businesses.

I would like to thank the chairwoman and the committee staff for working with me to add a provision that I brought forward to make sure that Congress has a clear picture of how exactly involved these underrepresented small business concerns have been in the SBIR and the STTR program.

I believe Congress can best make improvements to valuable programs and initiatives if we have an effective reporting requirement. This legislation will require that annual reports on the SBIR program include information regarding the SBIR program involvement of small business concerns that are owned by women, minorities and veterans, and again, I emphasize, all the small businesses that we have. By evaluating what SBIR awards have been distributed to these underrepresented businesses, my opinion is that Congress can best determine how to further involve businesses owned by women, minorities and veterans.

Again, I thank the chairwoman for the effort, and the ranking member. I support this legislation and I ask Members to support it.

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND).

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I want to thank my friend for yielding. And I want to thank the chairwoman, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, for the job that she has done and for what Ranking Member CHABOT has done, and the true bipartisan work and the good things that we have been able to do in the committee this year for small business.

But while we're talking about that, you know, we need to talk about the one threat that all small business people have come up to me in the last couple of weeks to talk about, and that is the price of fuel. Madam Chairman, I want to tell you that some of them feel like they have been lied to or maybe misled, because in 2006, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee sent out a memo that said, "To Assist the Candidates." "Demonstrate your dedication to fighting for middle class families by clearly explaining how you will work to keep down the price of gas if elected to Congress. Hold an event at a gas station or other logical locations where you call for a real commitment to bringing down gas prices, and pledge

that as a Member of Congress you will fight for families in your district, not for oil and gas executives that the Republican Congress has fought for." And so they went out.

And maybe some people were misled because if you look at April 11, 2006, one of the candidates, Jason Altmire, who is on our committee, had a campaign that said, "rising fuel costs" that got Jason Altmire, the Democratic nominee for the Fourth Congressional District, calling for alternative fuel sources. "Altmire made four stops Thursday in the district at gas stations all at prices for regular unleaded teetering at around \$3 per gallon. The Democrat blames his opponent and President Bush for the rising fuel costs." The price for a barrel of fuel at this time, a barrel of oil is \$57. You know, it's \$119 today.

Small business people have been misled to think that the new majority was going to do something about fuel costs. It's time we have a public outcry that we do do something. If this secret plan is released, if the Pelosi premium is brought down, gas prices are at a record at this time of \$3.50 a gallon.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from Georgia has expired.

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Chairman, I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I think that small businesses deserve an answer. I think they deserve to see what this program is. I think they deserve to see what this plan is, what they were promised.

The fact that gas at the time that they were told this was \$2.06 a gallon, oil was at \$76 a barrel, today oil is at \$119 a barrel, average price of gas is \$3.50, they've been misled. And so what we want to do is see that commonsense plan brought to the floor, laid out, that we can all look at and maybe we can work towards.

And it's not just raising taxes, it's not buying or riding bicycles, it's not windmills, it's not solar panels, it's got to be less dependence on foreign oil. And we can only do that by using our natural resources to provide energy for this country.

Mr. WU. Madam Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington, the chairman of the Research and Education Subcommittee of the Science Committee, Mr. BAIRD.

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Chairman, I would like to thank my dear friend from Oregon, my colleague and neighbor across the river, and also the gentlelady from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for her leadership, and my friend, Mr. EHLERS from Michigan, and Mr. CHABOT from Ohio.

I am particularly pleased about the aspect of this legislation that will eliminate what I feel are counterproductive barriers to participation by firms that receive venture capital in the SBIR program. This issue was brought to my attention by a local